



Town of Kittery, Maine

Fire Department

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Chief David O'Brien
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Report to Council

12 September 2011

Responsible Individual: David O'Brien, Fire Chief

Subject: Alternate Procurement Method (non-competitive award) for the procurement of Public Safety Communications System Upgrade equipment and installation.

Statement of Need:

The Public Safety Communications System has poor/no signal strength in areas of Kittery Point and the Foreside area. Improvement to system robustness, redundancy and full integration compatibility with the national emergency narrowband system are needed. Council approved a two-phase system upgrade in the FY12 CIP for a total of \$97,000 split equally over two years.

Background:

Kittery Public Safety communications equipment is divided into three categories, the actual radio hardware such as radios, base stations, portables, etc; the antenna equipment and repeaters necessary to amplify signals and transmit effectively over Kittery's terrain; and the software to enable the communication system to work.

This project would upgrade our existing system by placing an antenna on the Kittery Water District water tower on Rogers Road (approval granted) with equipment sited in either the Verizon or Water District facilities; and by adding a new tower and antenna system at Mitchell School (site in building design plans approved by Planning Board).

The gains from this upgrade are expected to eliminate all of the areas currently experiencing poor or no communication capability. Since CIP approval, I have met many times with the communication engineers from Two-Way Communications in Newington, NH (our long-time system/service contractor), and as a result minor modifications to the plan have been made.

Proposed Solution:

The upgrade plan is spread over two years with an antenna install on the water tower this fiscal year, and the install of a new tower and antenna at Mitchell School in year two. Year one proposal (proposal 15087, attachment #1) includes the purchase and installation of a new antenna with associated hardware and repeater on the water tower. It also includes the hardware and labor to provide a microwave connection to Kittery Dispatch,

and the labor to move all of the associated hardware, such as filters that will be reused, from the Kittery Dispatch. The proposal also includes the hardware and labor to provide a microwave connection to Kittery Dispatch. Year two (proposal 15088, attachment #2) includes the necessary labor and materials to install a new tower at the rear of the gymnasium at Mitchell School with a new antenna and hardware.

Two-Way Communications has been working with Kittery for well over a year on this upgrade. It has been reviewed and updated with minor changes based on splitting the project over two years and ensuring the desired outcome of clear communications throughout town is met.

Rationale for the Proposed Solution (including costs):

The first year cost of this proposal is \$49,364, exceeding the CIP current budget amount of \$48,500 by \$864 for which will be funded through the operation budgets of the Police and Fire Department. The second year cost is estimated to be \$44,178. The estimation is necessary as we expect Motorola will have a price increase prior to the purchase and install of the second year project. The installation of a concrete pad to support the tower at Mitchell School will use the remaining monies.

Kittery would avoid significant conversion costs by awarding this project on a non-competitive basis to Two Way Communications of Newington, NH. Two-Way is currently under contract with the Police Department to maintain our entire public safety communication system; have been for well over 40 years; and are quite familiar with our current system. They understand the interfaces between some of our older “Quantar” systems and our newer filtering and signal devices. Hiring another company would take several months of education in order to have complete understanding of our system.

The resources supplied by Two-Way are Motorola products and a Motorola trained technician force. Motorola is considered by most to be the most reliable and most capable radio communications equipment in the world. All of our existing equipment is designed and manufactured by Motorola and therefore needs to have qualified technicians to install, test and commission the compatible equipment for our upgrades.

We feel that Two-Way gives us a “best value” for our dollars by providing the town fair prices, the best hardware, best trained technicians and a location near enough (Newington) to support our emergency needs when communication problems happen.

Being in the best interest of the Town of Kittery, I request the Town Council authorize, under Title 3.3.2.7 Alternative Procurement Method, the Public Safety Departments to enter into an agreement with Two-Way Communications of Newington, NH for the purchase and installation of the equipment submitted in Two-Way Communications Proposal 15087 in the amount of \$49,364.

Recommendation: Approval